



PLANNING, ZONING, and
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2009



HAMILTON COUNTY
Regional
Planning
Commission



HAMILTON COUNTY
Community
Development



HAMILTON COUNTY
Rural
Zoning
Commission



Director's Message



To Those We Serve:

We are pleased to provide you with the 2009 Annual Report of Hamilton County's Planning, Zoning and Community Development Departments and the commissions we served – Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission, the Planning Partnership, and the Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission, the Hamilton County Board of Zoning Appeals, and the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners.

With critical support of county commissioners, jurisdiction members, volunteers and our many organization partners, we are able to report another year of successes in our core functions of community planning, data products, development services (zoning and subdivision), zoning services (permits and enforcement), and community development (federal grants administration). This success, however, was accompanied by many organizational changes.

Beginning in January, the Regional Planning Commission embarked on an internal department consolidation process including the merging of the Planning, Zoning, Community Development, Building Inspections, and Public Works Departments into the new Planning & Development Department. Staff spent substantial time in department-wide meetings to consolidate policies, merge organization tables, and establish a single budget for this new department. A major component of this transition included converting the Regional Planning Commission staff to Board of County Commissioner employees.

The goal of this consolidation is to create a single, high-performing, coordinated, efficient department to better serve residents and private industry in the development process. The formal launch of this consolidation in January aims to maintain the integrity of each separate department while creating coordinated, seamless integration of functions.

Despite this time consuming effort, we continued to expand our partnerships in 2009 to assist communities in Hamilton County to plan in a comprehensive manner and to collaborate to achieve regional goals identified in COMPASS. In this report, you will find more information about progress being made on important implementation initiatives such as:

- Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project
- Transportation Policy Plan
- Hamilton County Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant
- Communities of the Future Initiative (in collaboration with MSD)
- First Suburbs Consortium
- Planning Commissioners' Forum
- APA Webinars
- Contract Services

This report, as well as additional information about our work and progress, is available on our web site at www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/pd. We welcome your feedback, ideas, and suggestions about how we can better serve Hamilton County communities.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd M. Kinskey". The signature is fluid and cursive.

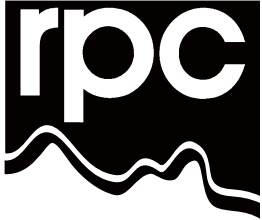
Todd Kinskey, AICP
Director of Regional Planning

2009 was a year of significant transition for the Regional Planning Commission

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Planning Commission



HAMILTON COUNTY
**Regional
Planning
Commission**

RPC Vision

To assist Hamilton County and its communities, agencies and citizens in planning and achieving sustainable development and related community and regional goals.

RPC Mission

- To build planning partnerships for creating and implementing community plans in the context of the region.
- To provide data management and analysis for effective planning decision-making in Hamilton County governments.
- To promote an equitable balance of local, county and regional perspectives and interests in community planning forums.

The Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is an alliance of local planning commissions and governments that seeks to address mutual goals related to physical, economic, and social issues among the 49 communities within Hamilton County. RPC helps ensure that community trends are anticipated, challenges are addressed, priorities are focused, and our collective future is planned and achieved strategically.

Membership

Membership in the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) is on an annual basis. In 2009, thirty jurisdictions were members of the RPC paying fees totaling \$52,943. Joint funding by local governments enables RPC's staff to support local governments through:

Networking and Lobbying

- First Suburbs Consortium
- Planning Partnership

Committees - collective solutions to local issues

- Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project
- Hamilton County Climate Initiative

Technical Assistance and Training

- Hamilton County Data Center
- Certified Planning Commissioners' Program

Communication

- Community Action Network Directory
- UPDATE Newsletter

The RPC provides advisory planning and development review services to the unincorporated areas (12 townships) of the County. It also provides similar services upon request to County municipalities that are members of the Commission and pay annual fees. The Commission's various planning activities include programs for subdivision compliance, community planning, development review and Census/data and information systems.

Planning Commission

The Commission's services are tied to annual work programs that monitor development trends, evaluate current policies, and update the Hamilton County Master Plan and related regulations for zoning, subdivision of land and traffic circulation.

The Commission is responsible for determining consistency of development proposals with adopted plans for township areas. Land use control responsibilities also include development review for consistency with zoning regulations, subdivision rules, and thoroughfare plans. Staff makes advisory zoning recommendations to the Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission and to township and municipal zoning commissions. The RPC administers and takes final actions on land subdivision for the entire unincorporated area. It coordinates the multi-agency review of subdivision plans and ensures conformity with the County's regulations.

RPC prepares and disseminates information and maps on a variety of subjects related to planning, and this information is available for public and agency use. It maintains Census and other data on population, housing, zoning, building activity, socioeconomic development, school trends, and many physical and land use features. The staff coordinates and assigns street address numbers for the unincorporated areas and several municipalities. The Commission's staff also supports the various functions of the Rural Zoning Commission, the Planning Partnership, the Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS), the First Suburbs Consortium, and other boards, committees, and task forces.

The Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission is a seven member board. The composition of this Commission (whose members serve five-year terms) is as follows:

- Four residents of the unincorporated area of Hamilton County, who are nominated by Township Trustees and other interested parties, and appointed by the Board of County Commissioners
- One resident of a City or Village with a planning commission, who is appointed by the Board of County Commissioners
- One resident of a City or Village with a planning commission, exclusive of Cincinnati, who is elected by mail ballot of municipal planning commissions
- One resident of the City of Cincinnati appointed by the City of Cincinnati Planning Commission

Planning Commissioners, 2009

- Donald Misrach
(reappointed 2006, current term expires 2011)
- Hal Franke
(reappointed 2009, current term expires 2014)
- Melvin D. Martin
(reappointed 2005, current term expires 2010)
- John Linnenberg, Chair
(reappointed April 2009, current term expires 2014)
- David Okum
(re-elected 2006, current term expires 2011)
- Larry Sprague
(reappointed 2005, current term expires 2010)
- Roxanne Qualls
(appointed October 2007, current term expires 2011)

Frank F. Ferris II Award



The creation of the Frank F. Ferris II Planning Award by the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission recognizes and honors the lifelong dedication of Mr. Ferris to municipal, county and regional planning activities. It publicly recognizes and promotes outstanding contributions to community planning in Hamilton County. RPC presents the award annually to a local planning commission or committee that best embodies planning ideals and demonstrates civic, economic, aesthetic and environmental significance.

The 2008 Frank F. Ferris II Planning Award (awarded in 2009) was presented to the City of Cincinnati Climate Protection Steering Committee for its work on the Green Cincinnati Plan.

Cincinnati is one of more than 1,000 U.S. cities that has committed to promote and implement climate protection measures that can help conserve scarce natural resources, save money, enhance the local economy, improve air quality, create jobs, and improve public health.

City administration, through the Office of Environmental Quality, developed the Green Cincinnati Plan (a Climate Protection Action Plan) with significant input from the community, including the Climate Protection Steering Committee. Composed of representatives of Cincinnati's business, government, environmental, academic, and civic organizations, the committee created five Task Teams of more than 150 subject matter experts and concerned citizens in the areas of Energy, Transportation, Land Use, Waste Management, and Advocacy.

Cincinnati Vice-Mayor David Crowley and Ginnell Schiller accepted the Frank F. Ferris II Planning Award on behalf of the City of Cincinnati Climate Protection Steering Committee



Planning Partnership

Mission

To bring together public, private and civic sector organizations engaged in community planning in Hamilton County so that mutual goals related to physical, economic and social issues can be planned for comprehensively and achieved collaboratively.

Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project (GCEP)

GCEP is a voluntary effort designed to help local communities improve service delivery and control costs through cross-jurisdictional cooperation, sharing of services and possible service delivery consolidation. GCEP is jointly funded by Hamilton County, the City of Cincinnati, and the Cincinnati Business Committee.

In 2009, GCEP continued to work with Management Partners Inc. to make business cases for moving forward with various shared service initiatives. They also focused on building capacity of the Center for Local Government such that the Center can assume the role of GCEP in the near future. Lastly, GCEP provide oversight for two grants awarded in 2008 (totalling \$122,000) from the Ohio Department of Development to study regional service collaboration. The final reports for these grants have yet to be released.

Annual Meeting

The 2009 Planning Partnership Annual Meeting took place on March 30, 2009 at Rookwood Tower in Norwood. County Commissioner Greg Hartman welcomed participants stressing the importance of collaboration and strategic partnerships to better serve our residents.

The keynote speaker was William Murdock, Director of the Urban Development Division of the Ohio Department of Development. Mr. Murdock talked about the programs available to local communities such as Brownfield Redevelopment, Clean Ohio and Green Space Conservation Programs, Historic Tax Credits and other resources of funding and creative ways of using them.

APA Webinars

During 2009, six online seminars organized by the American Planning Association were hosted by the HCRPC. These training opportunities were free and open to the public. Professional planners could earn up to a total of nine (9) credits (including 4.5 CM Law credits) toward AICP certificate maintenance. The APA is continuing the webinar series in 2010 and they will again be available for viewing at the HCRPC offices.

2009 Planning Commissioners' Forum Promotes Peer to Peer Learning

The 2009 Planning Commissioners' Forum was held November 7 at the Blue Ash Recreation Center. The event, now in its fourth year, was organized by and for commissioners of local municipal and township members of the Planning Partnership. The success of the Forum lies in its fast pace, carefully selected discussion topics, and meeting design, which through small discussion groups, allows personal interaction.



HAMILTON COUNTY

Planning Partnership



Chairperson

Chris Bortz
City of Cincinnati Representative



Chairperson-Elect

Richard Finan
Municipal Representative



Vice-Chairperson

Al Peter
Township Representative

Planning Partnership

2009 Jurisdiction Members

Addyston Village
Anderson Township
Arlington Heights Village
Blue Ash City
Cheviot City
Cincinnati City
Cleves Village
Columbia Township
Crosby Township
Deer Park City
Elmwood Place Village
Evendale Village
Fairfax Village
Forest Park Village
Glendale Village
Golf Manor Village
Greenhills Village
Green Township
Hamilton County Commissioners
Lockland Village
Madeira City
Mariemont Village
Milford City
Montgomery City
Newtown Village
North Bend Village
Reading City
Springdale City
Symmes Township
Woodlawn Village
Wyoming City

The keynote speaker for the 2009 event was Johnna Reeder from Duke Energy. Her presentation focused on "smart" technology and sustainable energy practices being deployed.

There were numerous opportunities for participants to engage in conversation and learn what their peers and neighboring communities are doing on issues of common interest. Some of the topics of the roundtable discussions were: A discussion on form based codes, "Is our community in compliance with the Fair Housing Act?," "Planning Commissions: The first in the line of fire." and "Is your community ready for deployment of new technology?"

Communications and Outreach

The Planning Partnership strives to keep its members and other interested parties informed of events and issues relevant to their community planning practices. To that end, the Planning Partnership publishes the quarterly newsletter UPDATE.

The Planning Partnership Web site is located at www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hcrpc/partner. This site is user friendly, and includes a library and a calendar of events that is updated daily.

Program Committee Sets the Path for the 2010 Planning Partnership Forum Series

In 2009 the Program Committee reconvened focusing on identifying topics of interest by local communities. The group analyzed input provided at the Annual Meeting, feedback from a questionnaire circulated through the Center for Local Governments, and research by committee members. As a result of this process, a three part series focused on Sustainability emerged to be offered in 2010. The topics selected were (1) The Built Environment: Retrofitting Cities, Communities, Neighborhoods, (2) Reinventing Communities in a Changing Environment (the importance of walkability and connectivity for an aging population and for public health prevention), and (3) Financial Sustainability: Fiscal Impact of Land Use Policies/Models.

Members of the Program Committee are: Michael Lemon (Columbia Twp.), Joanne Gerson (City of Montgomery), Stephanie Stoller (City of Blue Ash), Chad Edwards (Emersion Design), and Alan Warner (GBBN Architects, Inc.).

Transportation Policy Plan

In January 2009, the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners passed a Resolution directing the Regional Planning Commission staff to convene an ad-hoc Transportation Policy Plan Committee. The purpose of the Committee was to identify key transportation issues, opportunities and risks, and to make recommendations as to how such issues could be addressed by Hamilton County in such a fashion as to advance the transportation interests of the County.

With this direction, a committee representing a broad array of transportation interests

Planning Partnership

was appointed and met a number of times over the course of the year. The Committee agreed on several principles, which became the overarching themes or foundations of the proposed policy. Those principles were taken into context and reinforced each other as they were weaved into the Goals of the Policy Plan:

- Promote economic development and prosperity
- Unify our voice in legislation and lobbying efforts
- Promote cooperation, coordination and communication of organizations involved in allocation and distribution of funding
- Coordinate regulations in Hamilton County and its jurisdictions
- Promote rehabilitation of existing infrastructure first
- Facilitate connectivity and mobility of people and goods and data/communication (within the County, with adjacent counties, to the nation, and to the world)
- Promote energy conservation in all transportation projects and programs, especially by capitalizing existing transportation and other infrastructure assets
- Promote the evaluation and use/deployment of new technologies that will improve our region's transportation system
- Utilize collaborative decision-making that seeks collaborative funding participation from private, public, and civic sector sources

The Plan is intended to apply to all transportation and related infrastructure in Hamilton County that is supported or endorsed by the Board of Commissioners. The intended users of the Plan include the Board of Commissioners, County Departments reporting to the Board of Commissioners as well as those Hamilton County jurisdiction's that choose to follow the Vision and Goals of the Plan. The Draft will be submitted to the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners in early 2010 for consideration and approval.

Community Planning

Objectives:

*Prepare Strategic Plans
for Community COMPASS
Initiatives*

*Build partnerships
for implementation of
Community COMPASS*

*Develop implementation
frameworks*

*Support economic
development efforts
locally and countywide*

Greenhills Comprehensive Plan

A contract for technical services was signed at the end of 2008 between the Village of Greenhills and the Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (HCRPC) for the preparation of a comprehensive plan. Working with a core 14 member committee, HCRPC staff led the preparation of the plan that culminated with the adoption by Council on October 27, 2009.

The collective vision for the future of Greenhills has a multi-prong approach that builds on (1) the Village's historic past, (2) the respect of the natural environment, (3) creating a friendly and collaborative atmosphere where residents are afforded opportunities for community life and that, (4) creates an environment that is supportive of commercial activity that provides financial stability and much needed products and services for the community.

Goals and strategies in the plan focus on Image, the Village Center, Community Life, Schools and Education, Open Spaces Recreation and Community Services, and on Re-development and Economic Development Issues.

As part of this intense planning effort, 25 meetings were facilitated by HCRPC, including 16 meetings with the steering committee, 3 meetings with the Recreation Sub-committee, 3 Community-wide meetings, and 3 Focus Group meetings (one each on Housing and Historic Preservation, Greenbelt, and the Village Center).

A project website was created <http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hcrpc/greenhills/> and hosted by the HCRPC to ensure transparency and easy access by all to information and records related to this plan. Newspaper announcements, doorknob hangers, and announcements in public and community gathering places were also used to keep residents abreast of progress on the plan.

First Suburbs Consortium of Southwest Ohio (FSC-SW)

First Suburbs shifted leadership personnel around with two retirements requiring new executive committee members. Chuck Kamine from Amberley Village and Richard Ellison from Elmwood Place both left their elected positions at the end of 2009. John Smith from Silverton, Dan Pillow from Addyston, and Mark Weber from Blue Ash volunteered to serve on the executive committee for 2010 along with Jim O'Reilly (Wyoming), Tom Moeller (Madeira), Gerri Harbison (Montgomery), and Jenny Kilgore (Glendale).

First Suburbs closely watched and supported various legislative proposals in the General Assembly dealing with property foreclosures and abandonment. The most promising bill introduced in 2009 would expand the successful land bank system used by Cuyahoga County statewide. There is resistance to this from some county officials and state representatives, and First Suburbs needs to convince them of the need for land banking and gain their support for the legislation.



HAMILTON COUNTY

**First
Suburbs
Consortium**

Community Planning

First Suburbs has worked hard with its colleagues in Columbus, Cleveland, and Dayton to promote our agenda to General Assembly representatives and the Strickland administration. So far this effort has not brought many tangible results, and work needs to be done to more effectively communicate with our legislators.

Active participation in First Suburbs decreased in 2009, and the executive Committee wants to reverse this in 2010 through better communication with individual member communities and with the County Board of Commissioners.

First Suburbs has a representative (Jim O'Reilly) on the I-75 Reconstruction Advisory Committee. This group has an important role in planning for massive traffic diversions that will result from I-75 construction. Over the lifespan of the project (2011 through 2018), many member jurisdictions in the Mill Creek Valley will be affected by increased traffic volume, damages to roads and property, public safety costs from increased accidents, and impact on overall quality of life.

2009 FSC-SW Members

Addyston	Amberley Village	Blue Ash
Cheviot	Colerain Township	Deer Park
Elmwood Place	Evendale	Fairfax
Forest Park	Glendale	Golf Manor
Greenhills	Lincoln Heights	Lockland
Madeira	Milford	Montgomery
Mt. Healthy	North College Hill	Reading
St. Bernard	Silverton	Springdale
Springfield Township	Wyoming	

Hamilton County Bicycling Program (HCBP)

The first full year for this program was a busy one. In August, Hamilton County together with Cincinnati and First Suburbs filed an application for Bicycle Friendly Community status with the League of American Bicyclists (LAB). This application resulted from the hard work bicycling advocates and local governments throughout the county, supportive elected officials, and RPC staff.

In February, Hamilton County hosted a bicycle friendly community workshop with representatives from LAB. Enthusiasm for the project from this event carried through into Bike Month in May, and lots of local bicycle touring events throughout the spring and summer. Our team gathered an enormous amount of information about local cycling conditions for our application, and LAB was impressed with our effort.

Hamilton County along with 17 other communities across the country received an "Honorable Mention" designation. LAB provided a detailed critique of our application which we will use for our 2010 work program. Safe Routes to Schools, additional local touring events, and adoption of bicycling policies are some of the recommendations from LAB.



HAMILTON COUNTY
**Bicycling
Program**

Community Planning



HAMILTON COUNTY Climate Initiative

RPC staff has roles with Queen City Bike, Cincinnati BikePAC, and the Cincinnati Bike Master Plan steering committee.

Hamilton County Climate Initiative (HCCI) / Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG Formula)

In 2009, the Hamilton County Climate Initiative completed the last three public meetings with participating Hamilton County jurisdictions. The meetings included the January 29 meeting at the Colerain Township Senior Center on Energy, the February 27 meeting at Blue Ash Fire Station on Development and the April 22 Project Wrap-up Meeting at the Schott Center at the Cincinnati Zoo. Staff collaborated with Miami University Environmental Science Masters' students in developing Green Guides for the four topic areas of Solid Waste/Fuel Production, Transportation, Energy and Development. The Green Guides contain "fast facts" about the topics (e.g., for Energy - Building "green" could cut CO2 emissions by 35% in North America (CEC, 2008). Actions for local governments, businesses, schools, individuals/households (e.g. for Energy for local government - give recognition, awards, or incentives for energy efficient design in commercial building construction.) and WEB Resources with numerous links to information on the specific topic areas. The Green Guides were developed to be easily accessible and thorough information resources for all to use - downloadable from the HCCI web site <http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/climate/documents/>.

Hamilton County Solid Waste District staff developed twenty seven carbon calculators for possible climate initiatives implemented by Hamilton County jurisdictions (e.g. implement paper recycling in government buildings - the carbon calculator will take the number of tons recycled and estimate the annual reduction in CO2 equivalents). Planning staff developed a Master List of Strategies (e.g. for Development - (1) LEED Certification Tax Abatement for all New Construction and Major Renovations, (2) Implanting transit-oriented development (TOD)) and a Green Credit Score Methodology/Carbon Calculator Summary Sheet for the HCCI Web page Toolkit/Carbon Calculator. The HCCI Toolkit/Carbon Calculator was made available to all jurisdictions as a compact disc (CD).

To enable the implementation of recommended climate initiatives, Hamilton County applied for and received an Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) in the amount of \$4,841,600 that will fund the following programs for three years:

- \$800,000 to the Greater Cincinnati Energy alliance for the energy audit and retrofit program for residential, small businesses and non-profit buildings
- \$1,873,000 to public buildings (other than County Buildings) for investment in thermal and energy efficiency improvements primarily through performance contracting
- \$1,100,000 to county building for investment in thermal and energy efficiency improvements primarily through energy performance contracting (EPC)
- \$126,602 to increase hybrid vehicle use in government fleets in the County - pays the delta between costs of conventional vehicles and hybrids
- \$338,925 for other programs including energy efficiency (green jobs) skills training

Community Planning

and certification, investigating property tax-based assessment and/or on-bill (e.g. Duke, Water) for paying for energy improvements over time at affordable rates, and planning a showcase project of energy efficient homes developed with smart grid and alternative energy technologies

In November 2009, Hamilton County hosted a kick-off meeting at the Wyoming Civic Center for the Hamilton county jurisdictions to present and explain EECBG Formula Grant Programs. At the meeting, representatives from Clean Energy Solution, Inc., the County's energy efficiency consultants, presented the framework for the Grant's energy efficiency programs emphasizing the energy performance contracting program, Andy Holzhauser of the Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance (GCEA) also presented an outline of the GCEA energy audit and retrofit program targeted to Hamilton County residents, small businesses and non-profits. All told, representatives from 20 jurisdictions participated in the meeting. In December 2009, Hamilton County collaborated with the Greater Cincinnati Energy Alliance and other partners including the City of Cincinnati in the development of an Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant - Competitive Grant Application in the amount of \$55 million. This Retrofit Ramp Grant will also include Kenton, Boone and Campbell Counties and the cities of Covington and Florence in Kentucky. The grant requires a 5:1 local match - so the total expenditures from the grant will be more than \$250 million. If it's funded, the grant will enable GCEA to massively scale-up its energy efficiency retrofit program.

Hamilton County Regional Planning Collaborates with Metropolitan Sewer District on Communities of the Future/Project Groundwork

Since May of 2009, Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (HCRPC) staff has been working on a contract to provide community analysis and outreach for the Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati (MSD). This project was first identified as the green infrastructure project and now has been clarified as the Communities of the Future Program. Communities of the Future is MSD's vision for the implementation of Project Groundwork, one of the largest public works projects in the history of our metropolitan region. Project Groundwork seeks to solve the long-term combined sewer overflow problem (CSO) - 14 billion gallons of raw sewage, mixed with stormwater, overflow from our sewers into local streams and rivers annually.

As mandated by the Federal Consent Decree, MSD is committed to rebuilding our sewer infrastructure and is planning to utilize new ways of thinking and new engineering solutions that are more energy efficient and have lower long-term costs. These solutions include a mix of both "grey and green infrastructure." Grey infrastructure refers to new sewers, upgraded treatment plants and enhanced high-rate treatment facilities. Green infrastructure is designed to treat the problem at the source, by keeping stormwater out of combined sewers using best management practices such as pervious pavement, green roofs, bio-retention basins and by enhancing nature's built-in capacity to handle stormwater by restoring habitats, reforestation and "daylighting" urban streams (daylighting

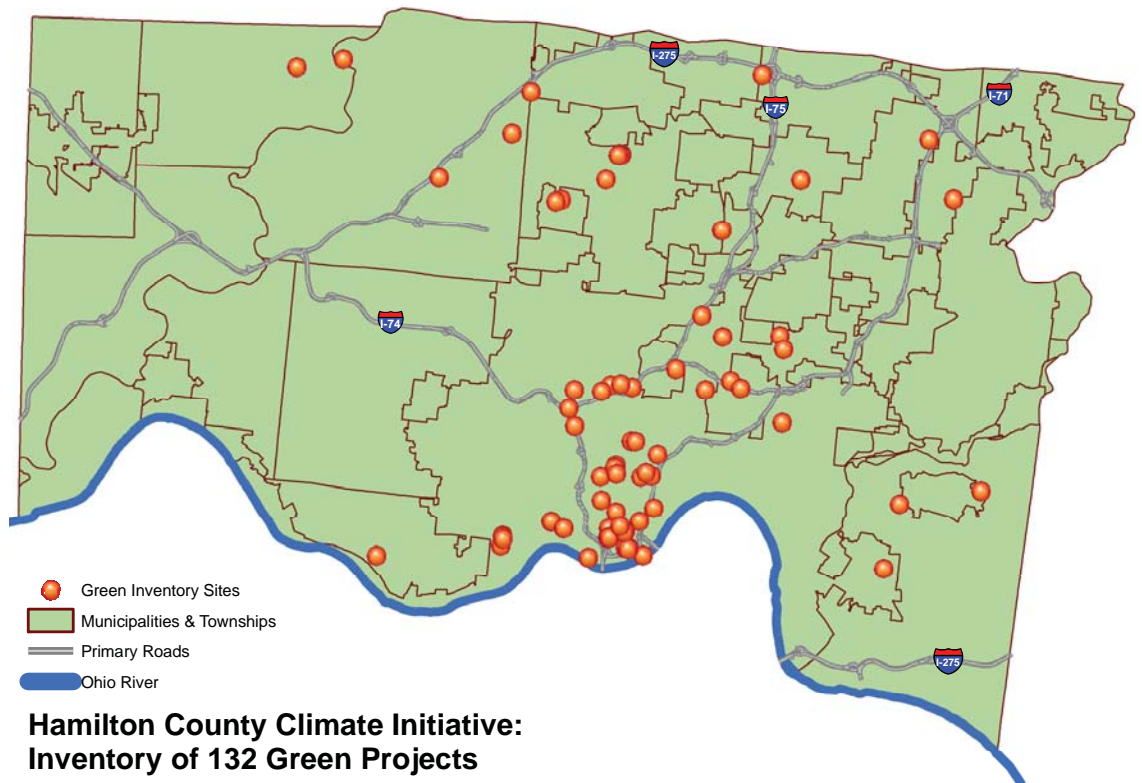
Community Planning

streams means to redirect a buried stream into an above-ground channel).

MSD's broader vision called Communities of the Future recognizes the ability of new green infrastructure to create better places to live which MSD plans to leverage by working with other stakeholders engaged in community improvements. MSD also sees Communities of the Future as a way to actualize the "triple-bottom Line" of sustainable development by maximizing the social, economic and environmental benefits of Project Groundwork. To implement Communities of the Future, MSD is employing a four-step process: 1. Compile and analyze existing data and information, 2. Identify opportunities and constraints to sustainable infrastructure solutions, 3. Develop solutions and an action plan and 4. Evaluate feasibility and implement the vision.

Planning staff has been instrumental in step one's data complementation and analysis with the development of the South Fairmount-CSO#5 Urban Audit (September 2009), which included a "boots on the ground" physical inventory with photographs of all buildings and evaluations of all building structural conditions in the South Fairmount study area. The Audit also included CAGIS parcel data and Auditor data for all the properties. Staff also completed the Lower Mill Creek Course Evaluation Planning Background Report (January 2010) which was an investigation of recent planning efforts, socio-economic trends and historical, community and natural resources in the sub-basins of the Lower Mill Creek.

Hamilton County Climate Initiative: Inventory of 132 Green Projects



Community Planning

Early small phases of Project Groundwork, called Early Success Projects, are being designed to educate the community about sustainable stormwater management and will provide the community with attractive public amenities such as rain gardens and bio-swales, and will prepare them for larger green infrastructure projects in the future. HCRPC assisted MSD with this phase by finding and completing an EPA Surface Water Improvement Funds Grant, which if successful, will partially offset the costs of one of the first Early Success Projects.

Community COMPASS

Following community review and a public hearing by the Regional Planning Commission in 2008, the Board of County Commissioners approved a Resolution on February 18, 2009 adopting the Community COMPASS Vision Update. The Vision and High Priority Initiatives, approved originally in 2003, remained largely the same except that some emerging planning issues were added to the priority initiatives list to reflect the current work program of staff.

Information Technology / Data Products

Objectives:

*Maintain RPC/RZC/
BZA network and "Help
Desk" functions as well
as Special Requests /
Projects*

Maintain CAGIS database

*Organize, analyze and
distribute 2000 Census
Data, internal and external
requests for data analysis
and maps and support for
ongoing Census activities*

*Design and maintain
an easy navigated and
understandable web site
that connects citizens to
information and services
provided by the County*

Geographic Information Analysis

The Data Products Section prepares maps and analyses for both internal county customers and the general public for a diverse list of topics. Examples include:

- as an ongoing project with the County Prosecutor's Office, updates to school, day care and preschool locations and 1,000 ft. buffer surrounding properties continued in 2009
- inventorying food and physical activity facilities, and analyzing walkability data for Hamilton County Health District 2009 Healthy Living Project in Woodland, OH; developed a GIS application for use in all of Hamilton County; designing a geodatabase for the South Fairmount-CSO#5 Urban Audit project; assisting in field collection of data
- updated CAGIS data for RPC and RZC; organized and documented datasets and meta-data for inclusion in CAGIS; updated zoning in Hamilton County
- data analysis for Hamilton County Small Business Development regarding The Banks worker's residence in the 15 county CMSA, three state region, and the United States
- testifying in court for the County and City Prosecutor regarding accuracy of CAGIS, signing affidavits regarding CAGIS measurements
- Analyzed data and prepared maps for the Southwest Ohio Council on Aging for a 2008 transportation needs assessment
- inventorying projects, facilities, and private businesses that fit into the Hamilton County Climate Initiative plan and producing a map for the web site (see map on page 12)

Information Technology

Every year has its defining events, and 2009 was indeed a busy year.

Bob Eaton, the Regional Planning Commission System Administrator, retired after over 20 years with Hamilton County. Bob was an Information Technology pioneer who created a sophisticated, efficient computer network for HCRPC that served as a model for other departments. Chris Porter, formerly the Hamilton County Web Developer, took Bob's position after several months working together to make a smooth transition. Chris is now Planning & Development Information Systems Manager. John Huth took over Chris' duties as web developer.

Chris' job immediately became much more complicated when RPC merged with four other departments into the Hamilton County Department of Planning & Development. Chris is now responsible for integrating the independent systems from these different departments into one large network. Challenges of doing this include various network upgrades and migrating users into one Active Directory Organizational Unit for logon and security purposes.

John Huth, our new web developer, is also very busy developing and learning the new web technologies, and continues to serve more than 35 departments with various web functions. John is doing all of this along with managing various Census 2010 projects.

Information Technology / Data Products

Planning & Development Information Technology team (formerly Regional Planning Commission) continues to create and maintain, under many different formats, the County web site. The newly rolled-out pages include the Hamilton County volunteers and the Hamilton County Bicycling Program. There are several reconfigured web pages as well and they include the First Suburbs and the Hamilton County Working Families.

P&D Information Technology Team is also charged with the responsibility of maintaining and upgrading the County's web servers. These include the two main web servers, an intranet server, a staging server, and two database servers. Several system improvements were implemented during 2009 in order to increase performance and reliability.

- Migration of the database tables to the new server and SQL Server upgrades
- Developing and deploying a backup strategy that includes a new Storage Server

We also maintain 24/7 monitoring which allows P&D staff to be notified of impending issues. This includes after-hours coverage by a consultant team in case of emergencies outside normal office hours. Backup and virtualization setup serves as the source for disaster recovery as well as recovering individual files or folders.

P&D Information Technology also continues to provide design and technical expertise to agencies and departments outside the Board of County Commissioner.

Demographic Analysis

Hamilton County was on pace to dip below 800,000 people by the Census 2010 count. However, the Census Bureau's 2008 estimate reveals that Hamilton County has increased slightly from year 2000 to 851,494 people in 2008. American Community Survey data reveals between the years 2000 and 2008, the White population declined - 11,412 (+ / - 1,077) while Black or African Americans increased 8,852 (+ / - 1,842), Asians increased 1,179 (+ / - 573) and Hispanic/Latino population increased 5,579.

Other American Community Survey data reveals that between 2000 and 2008 the number of married couple families in the county decreased -15,208 (+ / - 2,031) while household sizes and family sizes increased. The number of renter-occupied houses decreased over 16,000 units while the number of vacant housing units grew. Housing value increased and Hamilton County residents spent a larger percentage of their income on their housing costs. The unemployment rate grew 1.7% while the Educational Services, Health Care and Social Assistance Industry employed close to 10,000 people within 8 years. The median household income increased over \$8,000 while the poverty rate grew 15.3%.

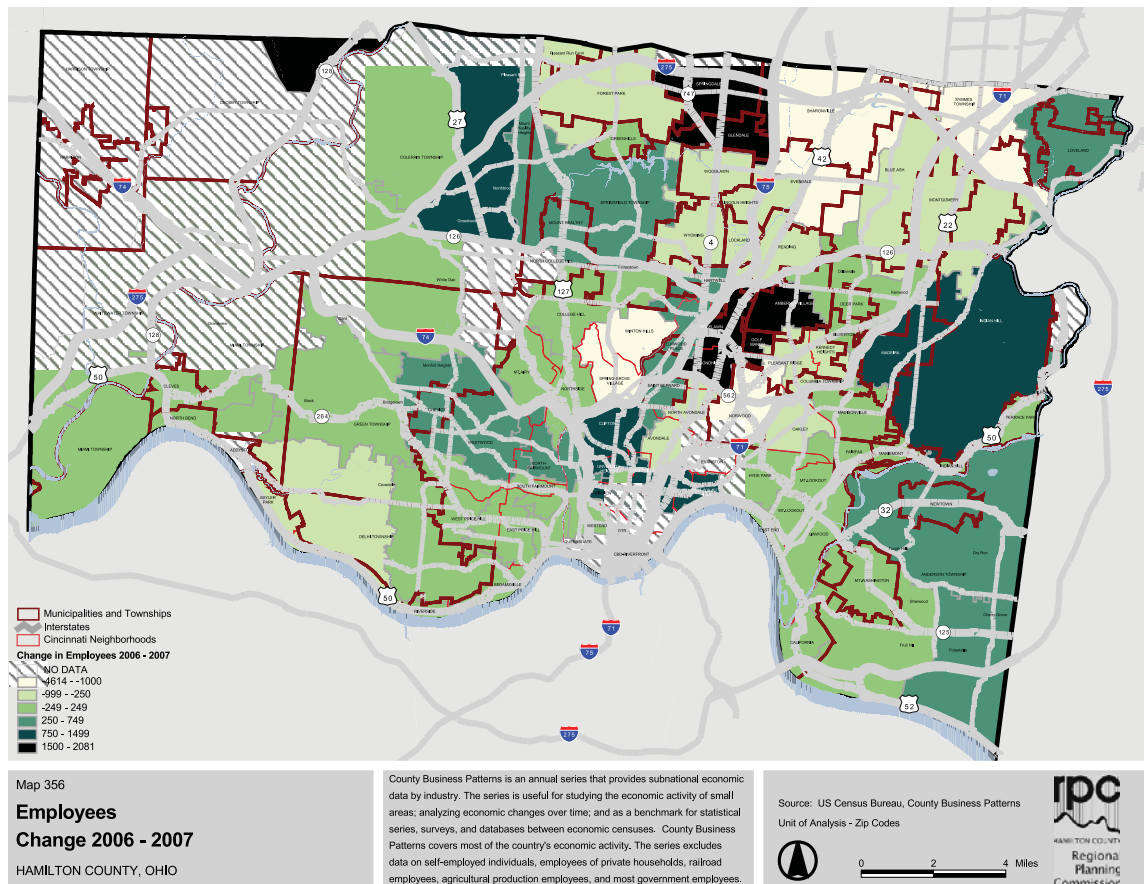
Despite this estimated population growth, Hamilton County public school enrollment continues to shrink. Between 2008 and 2009, the public school population dropped over 500 students. Within the last 30 years, the public school enrollment has dropped over 45,000 students.

Information Technology / Data Products

The most recent County Business Patterns released by the US Census Bureau reveal Hamilton County losing 470 business establishments and 4,964 jobs between 2006 and 2007. However, within that same period, the average salary increased \$1,109 (inflation adjusted), a figure higher than Butler, Clermont and Warren Counties. As displayed in more detail below, Zip Code Business Patterns data reveals several areas adding in jobs between 2006 and 2007.

Gearing up for Census 2010, the Regional Planning Commission participated in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program. The Census Bureau approved and added 5,760 addresses to their list. In addition, working under the Bureau's New Construction Program, over 250 new homes were added to the list. Staff worked with the City of Cincinnati in the Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP). Census Tracts were split and consolidated to meet target population ranges. Census block groups were realigned to match up with City of Cincinnati Neighborhood boundaries. New Census Designated Places (CDPs) were created to blanket all portions of the incorporated areas of Hamilton County.

Employees Change 2006-2007



Development Services

Development Services

The primary role of the Development Services Team is to coordinate the review of proposed developments and plans that require approval by the Regional Planning Commission, Rural Zoning Commission and/or Board of County Commissioners. This review requires communication with a multitude of stakeholders, including developers, engineers, architects, attorneys, property owners, development review agencies, elected officials, township representatives, and the general public. This team strives to balance the common good with the rights of private property owners while assuring compliance with established development standards. The various tasks of the Development Services Team are summarized below.

Zoning Review

In 2009, staff processed 59 zoning cases. Of these, 10 were zone amendments in townships that have local zoning control where the RPC is required by state law to make a recommendation. Another 21 were cases reviewed for the Symmes Township Board of Zoning Appeals and Zoning Commission and the Village of North Bend Planning Commission as part of contracts to administer zoning in these areas. The remaining 19 cases were located within the territory covered by the Hamilton County Zoning Resolution and included zone amendments, planned unit developments, and various other development review cases that required approval of the Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, or Board of County Commissioners.

Subdivision Administration

The primary role of Subdivision Administration is to review new preliminary subdivision plans. This requires staff to determine compliance with subdivision regulations and other adopted plans, coordinate cross-agency review, and prepare maps and staff reports for Planning Commission meetings. Staff is also responsible for overseeing the Improvement Plan and Record Plat approval process for each approved subdivision. Other duties related to Subdivision Administration include review and approval of minor subdivisions (lot splits), assignment of addresses for all property in the unincorporated areas of Hamilton County and some incorporated jurisdictions, and providing consultation services for landowners. In 2009, the RPC approved 2 new major subdivisions containing 44 lots and 11 minor subdivisions containing 23 lots for a total of 67 new lots available for development in the unincorporated portion of Hamilton County.

Land Use Plan Administration

The Development Services Team is also responsible for the review and maintenance of adopted comprehensive and land use plans in Hamilton County. Staff reviewed 7 Land Use Plan requests in 2009, which included plan amendments and whole township updates. Staff annually prepares a report detailing the status of adopted plans, corresponds with township officials regarding plan status, and reviews submitted plans and plan updates

Objectives:

Process and complete all development review applications - zone amendments, PUDs, conditional uses, land use plans & SPI reports

Review and process major/minor subdivisions in compliance with ORC and Hamilton County Regulations

Provide address assignment for unincorporated Hamilton County and communities under contract with the Building Department as needed

Development Services

Scope of Development Services

- Zone Amendments
- Planned Unit Developments
- Zoning Compliance Plans (Final Development Plan)
- Major Adjustments or Modifications
- Minor Adjustments
- Board of Zoning Appeals reports

for presentation to the Regional Planning Commission. The plans adopted by the commission include:

Anderson Township

Adopted Land Use Plans for Anderson Township include: the Beechmont Avenue Landscape Plan (2002), Ohio Riverfront Area Proposed Land Use Plan (2002), Anderson Township Revised Sidewalk Plan (2004), the Beechmont Corridor Study Update (2006), the Beechmont Corridor Vision Plan (2006), and the Clough Pike Business District Plan (2007), and the Anderson Trails/Walkways Plan Update (2009). RPC also adopted a Comprehensive Plan for the Township, including a township-wide land use plan, in 2005. The Township has begun the review and update process for the Comprehensive Plan and will likely have an updated plan for RPC consideration in 2010.

Colerain Township

The Colerain Township Trustees passed a resolution in 2003 appointing the Colerain Township Zoning Commission as the Township planning authority. The Township requests Land Use Plan recommendations from RPC staff, but does not request final adoption by RPC after approval by the Township Trustees. As a result, the Colerain Township Land Use Plan adopted by RPC has not been updated by RPC within the last five years and is no longer considered current according to RPC Bylaws.

Columbia Township

RPC adopted a Comprehensive Plan for Columbia Township in 2005. The Comprehensive Plan includes a Township-wide land use plan. The Township has also created Special Public Interest (SPI) Strategy documents for the Plainville Road Corridor and the Ridge and Highland areas to improve the functionality and design of both areas. The Plainville Road Corridor SPI Strategies Plan and the Ridge and Highland SPI Strategies Plan were both adopted by RPC in 2006.

Crosby Township

The Crosby Township Land Use Plan, completed by Township officials in June 2003, was adopted by RPC in 2004. The Plan encompasses the entire Township. An updated plan has been approved by the Township Trustees and will likely be considered by RPC in 2010.

Eastern Corridor Land Use Vision Plan (ECLUVP)

The ECLUVP was adopted by RPC in 2002 as a guide for future Land Use Plans and other matters submitted to RPC for consideration. This plan is an advisory guide and framework for the Eastern Corridor area and does not require RPC consistency on a lot-by-lot basis.

Green Township

The Green Township Land Use Plan Update was adopted by RPC in 2005. The document includes the township land use goals, strategies, objectives, and future land use plan map. Amendments approved since adoption include Edgewood Medical (2005), Stroschen Office (2006), Legacy Place Retail (2006), Boomer & Edgewood Office (2006), Harrison & Drew Retail (2006), Hillview Residential (2007), Bridgetown & Beihl Office (2007), 5470 Rybolt Road (2007), and Chatwood Office (2008), West Fork Institutional (2009), 6946 Harrison (2009), Cloverleaf Attached (2009), Mercy Hospital (2009), and 5458 Rybolt Road (2009). The township has initiated the process of updating the Land Use Plan and has hired the Development Services Team to facilitate the update process. The updated plan will likely be approved by the Township and considered by RPC in 2010.

Hamilton County 2030 Plan and Implementation Framework

Since the year 2000, RPC has been in the process of completing various components of a comprehensive plan for the future of Hamilton County. One of the main results of this process has been the completion of the 2030 Plan and Implementation Framework. Created with extensive citizen input, the plan contains: the Vision, Initiatives, Strategies and Implementation Status; Policy Plan; 2030 Concept Plans for Countywide Systems; Implementation Campaigns; and Performance Development - Milestones, Products, and Schedule. The plans were adopted by RPC in 2003 and updated in 2009.

Harrison Township

The Harrison Township Comprehensive Plan 2020 was initially adopted by RPC in 2001. The Township Trustees completed a review of the plan in 2006 and submitted the required Update/5 Year Review. The Update was adopted by RPC in 2006. Additionally, RPC adopted SPI Strategies Plans in 2006 that aim to encourage implementation of the Comprehensive Plan goals for southeastern Harrison Township.

Miami Township

The most recent review and update of the Miami Township Land Use Policy and Strategy Plan was adopted by RPC in 2009. The Township worked with staff of the Development Services Team to complete this update. The plan includes land use maps and policies for the entire township.

Springfield Township

A Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update for the entire Township was adopted by RPC in 2004. This plan includes detailed land use recommendations for the township and includes future land use plan maps. Staff has been in contact with township officials regarding completion of an update to the plan. The process for completing the necessary update will likely begin in 2010.

Development Services

Sycamore Township

A comprehensive update for the entire Township Land Use Plan was adopted by RPC in 2003. One amendment to the land use plan map (Pine Road Office) was adopted by RPC in 2003. A detailed review of the plan is currently required. The township is in the process of completing the necessary update and will submit the new plan for adoption by RPC as soon as it is completed.

Symmes Township

The most recent Update/5 Year Review of the Symmes Township Land Use Plan was adopted by RPC in 2009. The township worked with staff of the Development Services team and consultants to complete both a new Comprehensive Plan for the entire township and an update to the current Land Use Plan document.

Western Hamilton County Collaborative Plan (WHCCP)

The WHCCP was adopted by RPC in 1999 as a guideline for the future development of 10 Western Hamilton County jurisdictions. It was amended in 2000 to reflect changes in the Land Use Concept Map, and in 2002 to reflect the addition of new Action Strategy Alternatives to the Plan. This plan provides an advisory guide and framework for development in the western portion of the county and does not require RPC consistency on a lot-by-lot basis.

Development Services Highlights and Accomplishments

In addition to the core services already identified, the Development Services Team participates in numerous other planning efforts throughout the county. Staff also provides for fee services through contracts with jurisdictions within the county, coordinates specific planning projects, and offers support to volunteer planning organizations. Major projects and accomplishments completed by the Development Services staff are included below.

Mariemont North Square District Study

Staff obtained a contract with the Village of Mariemont to provide planning services for review of existing zoning regulations and recommendations for improvements needed to allow appropriate redevelopment within the village. The main issue identified during preliminary meetings with village officials was that the existing zoning code did not contain a district that would allow the construction of new-urbanist residential or mixed-use developments. Staff conducted a review of existing regulations, the original plans for the creation of Mariemont, and previous development proposals and presented preliminary findings at a public meeting and workshop held in the village in 2008. Comments and concerns gathered at the meeting were then used to create a draft set of zoning text amendments, including the creation of a new mixed-use zoning district. The final recommendations were presented to the village in January 2009. A variation of the recommendations was ultimately adopted by the village and are now included in the Mariemont Zoning Ordinance.

Development Services

Greenhills Comprehensive Plan

Staff assisted the Community Planning section in administration of a contract with the Village of Greenhills to prepare a comprehensive plan. Staff of the Development Services Team assisted in the preparation of documents, graphics, and maps, maintenance of the project web site, and facilitation of public meetings. The comprehensive plan was completed and adopted by the Village of Greenhills in 2009.

Green Township Land Use Plan Update 2010

Staff prepared and finalized a contract with the Green Township Trustees to provide professional planning recommendations and facilitation of the latest Green Township Land Use Plan update process. The process will officially begin in January 2010 with an expected completion in May. Tasks will include review and revision of the existing maps and text, suggestions for changes, coordination of the Green Township Land Use Planning Committee meetings, preparation of a draft of the committee recommendations, facilitation of a public open house meeting to review recommendations, and presentation of the plan to the Green Township Trustees.

Building and Development Consolidation Project

Staff participated in the consolidation of the Planning and Zoning, Community Development, Building Inspections, and Public Works Departments into the new Planning and Development Department. Staff attended department wide meetings, review proposed consolidated policies and organizational tables, and helped ensure a smooth transition period.

APA-OH World Town Planning Day Charrette

Staff worked with a subcommittee of the Cincinnati Section of the American Planning Association - Ohio to plan and conduct the 2009 World Town Planning Day Charrette in the City of Middletown on November 6, 2009. Staff work included participation in the community selection process, web site design/maintenance, event notification, solicitation of participants, and facilitation of the event. The focus of the event was on the potential 3C Passenger Rail station in Middletown. The participants included professional planners, planning students, City officials, and others who were broken into four groups to study various aspects of the issue. These groups included land use around the station, connecting the station to downtown Middletown, connectivity to surrounding communities, and design of the station. Recommendations were presented to city officials at the end of the process.

Foreclosure Mapping

Staff collected foreclosure data for 2008 and 2009 for the purpose of creating a map detailing the location and potential concentration of foreclosures in Hamilton County. The data was checked for quality, edited to remove duplications and converted to a database format. The data was then geocoded and mapped using the county GIS system. This information was created to assist the Community Development department in administering the U.S.

Development Services

Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP). However, the mapping project was so useful that additional maps have been requested by numerous other jurisdictions within the county. Maps were prepared for Mount Healthy, Silverton, Colerain Township, and Golf Manor, among others.

Stable Integrated Communities Mapping Project

Staff updated maps for use in collaboration between the Data Products section and the US Census Bureau showing integrated communities since 1970.

MSD Green Infrastructure Assistance

Staff assisted the Community Planning section and MSD in the creation of a series of maps for use in the CSO#5 (Lick Run) green infrastructure program. Maps were considered for promotional material and future reports as part of the ongoing contract to provide assistance to MSD.

Zoning Commission

RZC Vision

To have all development in compliance with Hamilton County zoning regulations as well as consistent with the land use goals and objectives of the region and each affected township.

RZC Mission

To administer and enforce the zoning regulations adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and the citizens of Hamilton County while continually improving public awareness and understanding of the importance of zoning in protecting public health, safety and welfare as well as private property. The Rural Zoning Commission (RZC) serves the Board of County Commissioners by administering and enforcing zoning in four townships and by providing contract services to a number of townships and villages in Hamilton County.

The Zoning Resolution is interpreted and enforced by the office of the County Zoning Inspector. Duties of the RZC administrative staff and Zoning Inspectors include:

- Administration of the Board of Zoning Appeals cases
- Coordinating zoning amendment review and scheduling of public hearings
- Presenting amendment and other zoning requests before the Regional Planning Commission, Rural Zoning Commission, Board of Zoning Appeals, and Board of County Commissioners
- Maintaining official maps and files
- Assisting the public with zoning information
- Reviewing all building permits for zoning compliance
- Issuing zoning certificates and final zoning inspections certificates for all building permits
- Conducting field inspections on reported zoning violations
- Abating zoning violations through due process
- Maintaining complaint and abatement records
- Updating the zoning regulations

The five members of the Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission are appointed by the Board of County Commissioners for a five-year term. The members must reside in an area under the jurisdiction of County zoning. In 2004 the Board of County Commissioners voted to include an alternate on the Rural Zoning Commission.

Zoning Certificates

In 2009, RZC staff issued a total of 698 zoning certificates. Of that total, 479 were located in areas governed by the Rural Zoning Commission (RZC) and 219 certificates were in



HAMILTON COUNTY

Rural Zoning Commission

Zoning Commissioners, 2009

- Robert Polewski
Resident of Miami
Township (reappointed
2003)
- Joel Cornelius,
Resident of Harrison
Township (appointed
2005)
- Christian James
Resident of Miami
Township (appointed
2005)
- Susan Olson,
Alternate, Resident of
Columbia Township (re-
appointed 2009)
- David Steinriede,
Vice Chair, Resident
of Green Township
(appointed 2006)
- Jerry Thomas, Chair
Resident of Green
Township (appointed
2005)

Zoning Commission

townships or jurisdictions that contract zoning review services through the Local Zoning Assistance Center (LZAC).

In areas governed by the RZC, residential accessory structures, including fences, walls, swimming pools, decks, detached garages, and sheds ranked as the highest number of zoning certificates issued with a total of 213. Attached/detached single family dwelling units were the second highest number of zoning certificates totaling 76. Staff issued a total of 38 zoning certificates for residential additions and 14 revisions to previously issued zoning certificates. Combined commercial applications including new buildings, building additions, new tenant, alterations, etc., totaled 65 zoning certificates. There were 73 sign permits issued.

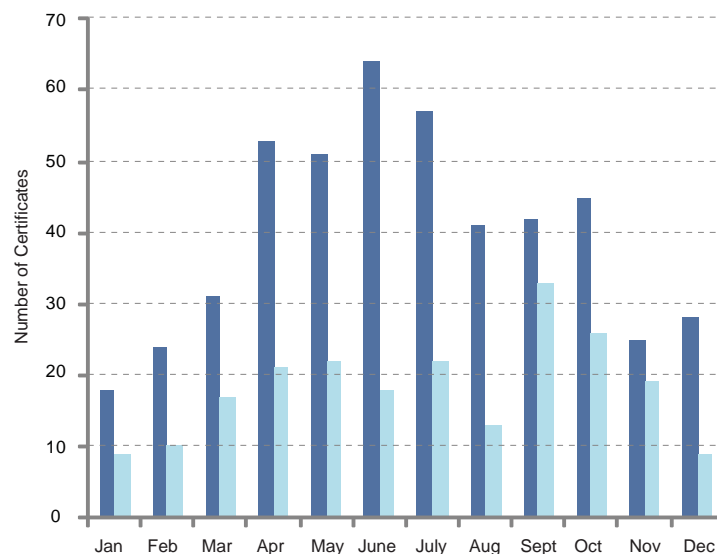
In zoning plan review contract areas, accessory structures, including fences, walls swimming pools, decks, detached garages, and sheds also ranked as the highest number of residential zoning certificates issued with a total of 72. There were 14 new single family dwellings reviewed and issued by staff. Residential additions totaled 12 and revisions to previously issued certificates

9. Combined commercial applications including new buildings, additions and alterations totaled 39 with 73 sign certificates issued.

In addition to the daily routine of reviewing site plans and issuing zoning certificates, zoning staff members respond to phone and e-mail requests for zoning information, maintain and digitize zoning files, scan and digitize all zoning certificates, issue all house numbers.

Zoning Certificate Activity, 2009

■ Hamilton County Zoning Jurisdictions
■ Contract Zoning Jurisdictions



Board of Zoning Appeals

In an attempt to reduce costs, the Board of Zoning Appeals Department was abolished in 2009. The staff of the Rural Zoning commission assumed the responsibility for administering the Board of Zoning Appeals including coordinating, scheduling and processing of all variance, conditional use, compatible nonconforming use and zoning appeals cases. The Board of Zoning Appeals heard 25 cases in 2009 including: 7 cases in Columbia Township, 10 cases in Green Township, 4 cases in Harrison Township and 4 cases in Miami Township.

Community Development

Zoning Enforcement

The Hamilton County Rural Zoning Commission enforces the zoning regulations within four townships. However, through the Local Zoning Assistance Center (LZAC), the zoning inspectors enforce nuisance ordinances and zoning regulations in seven additional communities.

The type of zoning violations the zoning inspectors investigated this past year included in-operative vehicles (junk vehicles), fences, sheds and other accessory structures improperly located or without zoning certificates, signs, home occupations, lighting, nonconforming uses, and noise complaints. In 2009, zoning enforcement staff conducted 4,214 zoning violation investigations, resulting in 1,857 zoning violation notices sent to the property owners. There were 1,671 violations abated within 30 days of the first notice, and out of the remaining 186, only 48 resulted in issuing zoning violation citations.

Other activities of the zoning inspectors include the inspection of new construction and annual inspections of all Planned Districts to assure zoning compliance. The majority of zoning certificates issued in 2009 required more than one or two site inspections. From the 698 zoning certificates issued, 674 zoning certificate field inspections were conducted. In addition, inspectors integrated field inspections with the Permits Plus computer programming linked into the CAGIS system to allow for the tracking of enforcement and the location of groups of problem properties.

Local Zoning Assistance Center

The Local Zoning Assistance Center (LZAC), is designed to assist cities, townships, and municipalities in the daily operation and enforcement of locally adopted zoning regulations. By using the services of LZAC, participants can realize a significant cost savings while providing individuals in their community the benefit of an experienced, full-time staff.

LZAC is staffed by a team of seven employees: the zoning administrator, one certified land use planner, two plans examiners, one technical/clerical specialist and two enforcement inspectors. RZC has been providing zoning services to the unincorporated area of Hamilton County since the adoption of zoning in 1949 and zoning services through LZAC since 1996. Many of the zoning and land use services available today are based on information in the Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System (CAGIS). The staff of LZAC works with jurisdictions to design a zoning administration and enforcement program tailored to meet their specific needs and goals.

County Zoning Jurisdictions

Columbia Township
Green Township
Harrison Township
Miami Township

Contract Service Areas

Symmes Township
Complete Services
Delhi Township
Enforcement
Northeast Green Township
Enforcement
Miami Township
Nuisance Abatement
Crosby Township
Nuisance Abatement
Harrison Township
Nuisance Abatement
Whitewater Township
Nuisance Abatement

Type of Services Provided by the Local Zoning Assistance Center

- Zoning certificate review and issuance
- Verbal and written correspondence related to zoning regulations and inquiries
- Field inspection and code enforcement
- Maps, mailing and presentation graphics related to zoning appeals, variances or zone change requests
- Preparation of zoning text amendments and related documents, research and reports

Community Development



HAMILTON COUNTY Community Development

CD Mission

To provide quality housing as well as community and economic development opportunities to disadvantaged families and individuals in Hamilton County in accordance with federal rules and regulations and for purposes as directed by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Hamilton County Community Development Department was created in 1975 to administer grant funds made available under newly passed federal legislation known as the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The funds provided by the legislation spawned the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG), or simply “Block Grant.” Today, we administer the county’s Block Grant funds as well as other federally funded programs for our participating communities. As a qualifying “urban county” Hamilton County receives annual entitlement grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Our primary mission in administering these grants is to provide enhanced community, economic and housing development opportunities to low and moderate income households in Hamilton County. Some highlights from each of these programs are described below.

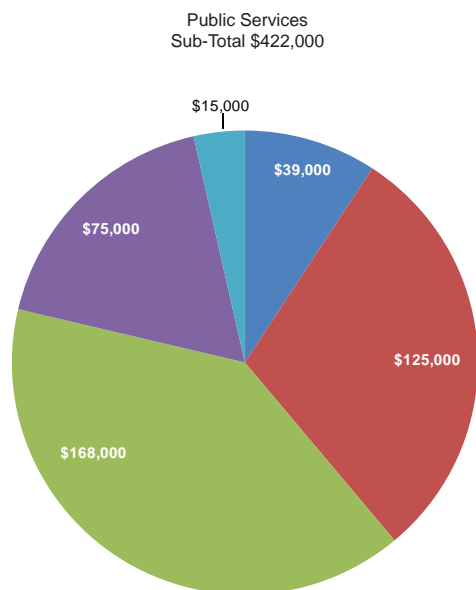
Community Development Block Grant

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides funding for projects in participating communities of Hamilton County that benefit low to moderate income populations or eliminate slum and blight.

Eligible projects cover a wide range and can include public service programs, construction or redevelopment of public facilities, rehabilitation of streets, sewers and other infrastructure, housing activities and economic development. Currently 40 of the county’s

48 non-entitlement communities participate in the CDBG Program. Funding is typically divided equally between community specific projects and county-wide initiatives.

- Health Services
- Community Center Operation
- Homeless Services
- Foreclosure Prevention
- Other



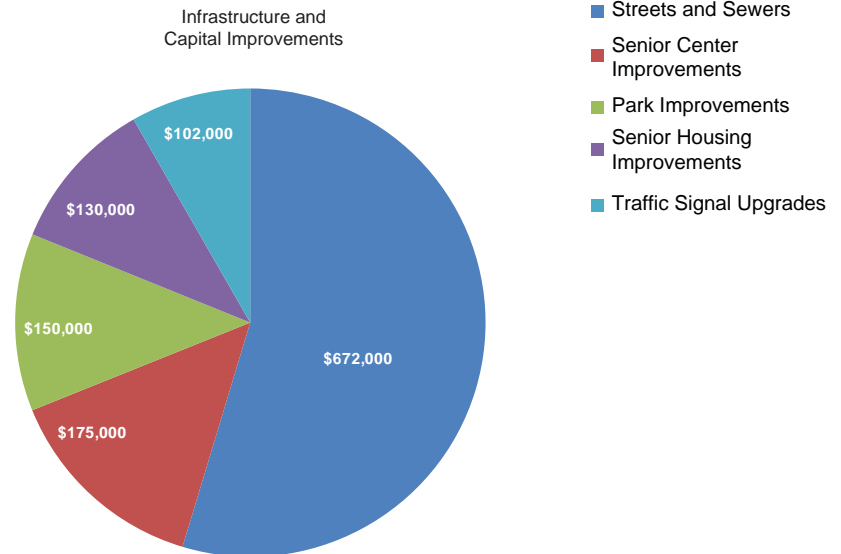
Public Services

Each year approximately 15% of the CDBG budget is allocated for public service activities. Typically, these are social service programs intended to benefit low to moderate income clientele. Examples of public service activities include programs for seniors, at risk youth and the homeless. Other services funded include food pantries, medical and dental access and foreclosure prevention.

Community Development

Infrastructure/Capital Improvements

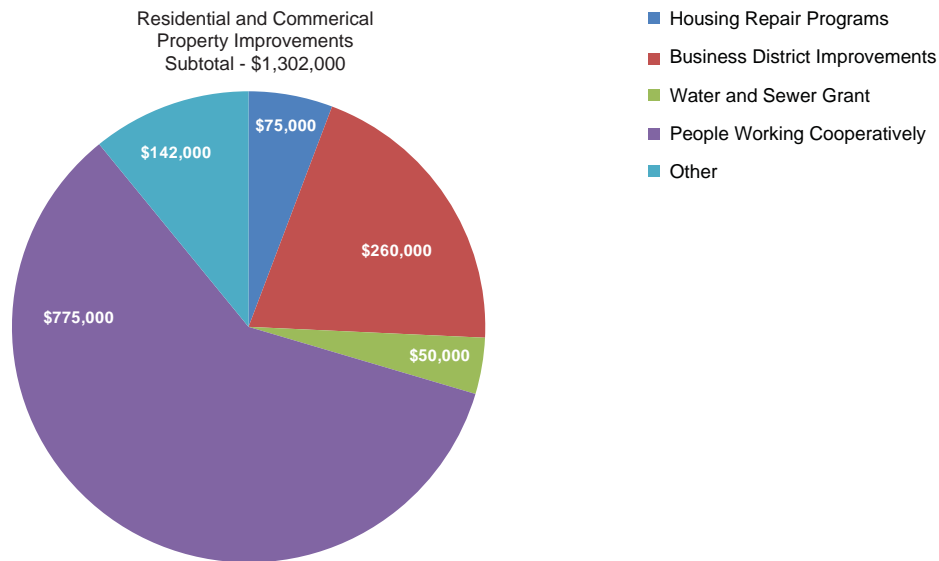
In 2009, over 30% of the total CDBG allocation went towards activities involving infrastructure or capital improvements. Projects involving rehabilitation of streets and sewers were popular, with eight participating communities undertaking such projects. Capital improvement projects included senior center improvements in Green and Whitewater Townships, park improvements in Cheviot and Mt. Healthy and senior housing upgrades in Sharonville



Residential/Commercial Property Improvements

As Hamilton County's neighborhoods and commercial corridors age, deteriorated, blighted and obsolete buildings become more common. CDBG funds are used in a variety of ways to alleviate such conditions. Some of the activities funded in 2009 included:

- Housing repair programs in Colerain Township, Golf Manor and Springdale
- Business district improvements in Loveland, Mt. Healthy and North College Hill
- Demolition funds for both residential and commercial properties
- A residential water and sewer grant program
- An emergency repair program operated by People Working Cooperatively



HOME Investment Partnerships Program

In addition to CDBG, Hamilton County receives an annual grant under the HOME Investment Partnerships Program. As the name implies, HOME funds can be used to underwrite activities to purchase, build and/or rehabilitate affordable housing for rent or homeownership. HOME dollars can also be used to provide direct rental assistance to low-income households. In 2009, the county's HOME allocation was targeted primarily to affordable housing development and tenant based rental assistance.

Community Development

Affordable Housing Development - Cincinnati Housing Partners

Hamilton County Community Development has working agreements with a number of housing development organizations in the area. However, our relationship with Cincinnati Housing Partners (CHP) stands out for its longevity and productivity. CHP has been at the forefront of low income housing development for many years. During 2009, our association was especially fruitful as CHP completed the sale of 5 homes to qualified low income buyers. The homes, located in St. Bernard, North College Hill and Lockland were built or rehabilitated by CHP using HOME funds.

Tenant Based Assistance Program

The Tenant Based Assistance Program (TBA) provides rental assistance to approximately 175 disabled individuals and families throughout Hamilton County. After undergoing a screening process conducted by partnering agencies, approved applicants have a portion of their monthly rent paid with TBA proceeds. In late 2008 the City of Cincinnati contracted with the Community Development Department to administer a similar program for an additional 85 disabled households wishing to reside in the City of Cincinnati. In mid-2009, the City authorized increased funding, allowing assistance to be provided to an additional 40 households.

Both programs are modeled after the Housing Choice Voucher Program, where eligible low income families rent housing from landlords who are willing to participate. Families receive a subsidy from the program to make the apartment more affordable.

HIP – The Home Improvement Program

HIP enables Hamilton County property owners to obtain a loan at 3% below market rate to make improvements to their home or business. Approved applicants can borrow up to \$50,000 for a 5 year term to finance a wide variety of projects. Popular improvements include kitchen and bath upgrades, window replacement and exterior roof and facade improvements. All work financed with HIP funds must be completed within the first year of the loan.

HIP is structured as a linked deposit program. Under such an arrangement, Hamilton County accepts reduced rates on its deposits with participating banks in order to reimburse for the discounts offered to HIP customers. Area lenders that have agreed to participate in the HIP Program include Fifth Third, First Safety, Key, National City, North Side, and U.S. Banks.

Emergency Shelter Program

The Emergency Shelter Program (ESG) provides operational support for the Mt. Airy Shelter, a homeless shelter for men. The program is currently administered by the Talbert House and assists over 500 men annually.

Community Development

Stimulus Community Development Block Grant (CDBG-R) - \$911,939

Additional CDBG funds were made available to Hamilton County from HUD for CDBG eligible activities, with an emphasis on projects that created jobs or built infrastructure, and were ready to start within 120 days. The application was submitted to HUD in June, and approval was received in late July. Ten projects were approved, with three serving residents Countywide, and seven in specific communities. These ranged from street reconstruction, to remodeling of a community center, to demolition of blighted buildings, to homeless services. As of the end of 2009, all of the projects were underway, and three had been completed.

Homelessness Prevention and Rapid Re-Housing Program (HPRP) - \$1,396,621

These funds were made available to Hamilton County through HUD for prevention of homelessness, and for recently homeless people to gain access to housing. The County worked in conjunction with the city of Cincinnati (which received \$5,339,182), and contracted with the Cincinnati Hamilton County Continuum of Care (CoC) to provide rental assistance, security deposit assistance and payment of past-due utility bills for recently homeless individuals and families, and those at risk of becoming homeless. Case management services are being provided from other funds, for a minimum of three months per household. The application was submitted to HUD in May, approval was received by late July, and the Contract with the CoC began mid-August.

Home Sewage Treatment System Grant Program - \$392,891

The Ohio Department of Health and the Ohio EPA made funds available through ARRA to Counties and Cities in Ohio, to provide 75% of the cost of repair or replacement of failing home sewage systems, in the form of a grant to the homeowner, whose income was below 200% of the poverty level. The application was submitted to the State by July 10 for \$500,000, and approval was received by late July, but initially for only \$180,000, due to the statewide interest in the Program. In the beginning of November, the state made additional funds available to any jurisdiction that could commit the funds by December 1, 2009. Hamilton County was able to commit an additional \$212,891 of funds, for a total award of \$392,891. A total of 29 systems will be repaired or replaced through this program, with about half of them completed by the end of 2009.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) - \$7,970,490

In November of 2008, Hamilton County applied for the Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) fund made available through the federal Housing and Economic Recovery Act (HERA), which preceded the Stimulus funds. The Hamilton County NSP began in March of 2009 when funding was awarded to Hamilton County from the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Fifteen communities were identified as target areas and have signed Memorandums of Understanding with the County, outlining their

Community Development

planned activities over the next few years. As of the end of 2009, there had been over 15 demolitions completed in at least 9 communities, with 20 more planned for early 2010. Also, many communities had acquired foreclosed or abandoned homes for rehabilitation or demolition, and many more were ready to be acquired. Rehab of homes will occur in the Spring and Summer of 2010, and these newly rehabbed homes will be sold to low, moderate or middle income homebuyers. The County was on track with the rest of the nation in meeting deadlines for commitment and expenditure of funds, according to a HUD analysis.

Neighborhood Stabilization Program 2 (NSP 2) - \$24,068,968

The County applied to HUD with a Consortium of partners including the City of Cincinnati, the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and Model Group, for a \$59.6 million grant to provide assistance in acquiring abandoned and foreclosed homes, to rehabilitate the homes, or demolish and newly construct housing, to stabilize communities. The competitive application was submitted to HUD by July 17, 2009, and announcement of award of funds was made on January 14, 2010. The Hamilton County Consortium was awarded \$24,068,968, one of only 56 grantees among an applicant pool of almost 500 across the country. Execution of Grant agreements and Consortium Funding Agreements, and project planning will all occur in early 2010.

Planning and Zoning Staff

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Director

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Bryan Snyder, AICP

Development Services
Administrator

Mark Abell

Subdivision Administrator

Lori Adler

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Karen Ambrosius

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Zoning Plans Examiner

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John Huth

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Catalina Landivar-Simon,
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Senior Planner

Cecilia McKinley

Zoning Specialist

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Senior Planner

Rebecca O'Brien

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K.D. Rex

Senior Planner - GIS

Jay Springer

Graphics / Communications
Specialist

Sharon Stewart

Development Review Specialist

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Zoning Plans Examiner / Inspector

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Program Manager

Kathie Huesman

Rehab Loan Specialist

Christine Osbourne

Secretary

Sherry Lynn Parsons

Accountant

Katie Rademacher

NSP Project Manager

Lana Smith

TBA Inspector

Barbara Wright

TBA Coordinator

In addition to the daily work functions performed by staff in the Planning, Zoning, and Community Development Department, the organization was also actively involved with initiatives in numerous organizations.

- Affordable Housing Advocates
- Agenda 360 Effective Governance Action Team
- American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP)
- American Planning Association (APA)
- American Planning Association-Ohio, Executive Committee
- American Planning Association-Ohio, Legislative Co-Chair
- American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)
- Anderson Township Comprehensive Plan Update Steering Committee
- CAGIS (Cincinnati Area Geographic Information System) Policy Board
- Clean Ohio Conservation Program / Natural Resources Assistance Council
- Cincinnati Form Based Code Initiative
- Cincinnati/Hamilton County Community Action Agency Board
- Cincinnati/Hamilton County Continuum of Care for the Homeless
- County Planning Directors Association of Ohio (CPDAO)
- Go Cincinnati
- Greater Cincinnati Commitment Alliance
- Greater Ohio Research Council
- Green Partnership for Greater Cincinnati - Transportation Task Force
- Government Cooperation & Efficiency Project (GCEP), Executive Committee
- Hamilton County Interagency Development Workgroup
- Hamilton County Economic Growth Cabinet
- Hamilton County Environmental Action Committee
- Hamilton County Homeowners Preservation Group
- Hamilton County Report Card Committee
- Hamilton County Transportation Policy Plan Task Force
- Hamilton County Urban Land Assembly Program / Brownfields Redevelopment Board
- Hamilton County Web Site Committee
- Hamilton County Climate Initiative Planning Team
- Homeless Clearinghouse
- Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) Advisory Committee
- Intermodal Coordinating Committee of the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Council of Governments
- Mill Creek Watershed Council of Communities
- National Association for County Community and Economic Development (NACCED), President
- Ohio Ambassador
- Ohio Conference of Community Development (OCCD)
- Ohio Economic Development Association (OEDA)
- Ohio - Kentucky - Indiana (OKI) Regional Council of Governments
- Planning Partnership Committees: Executive, Planning Commissioners' Forum, Planning Commissioners' Program
- Prioritization Subcommittee of the Ohio Kentucky Indiana Council of Governments
- Sustainable Cincinnati Leadership Group
- Techsolve Development Process Mapping/Re-engineering Task Force
- University of Cincinnati, College of Design, Art, Architecture and Planning (DAAP) Alumni Governing Board

